



جامعة البليدة 2 - الجزائر

كلية الآداب واللغات



مختبر الدراسات الأدبية والنقديّة

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المدوّنة

# المدونة

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يصدرها مخبر الدراسات الأدبية والنقدية

قسم اللغة العربية وأدابها

كلية الآداب واللغات

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- 11- تخضع جميع المقالات المرسلة إلى المجلة للتقسيم من قبل أعضاء اللجنة العلمية للمجلة، ويبلغ الباحث إلكترونيا (عبر المنصة الجزائرية للمجلات العلمية) بنتيجة التقسيم.

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## Editorial

In the name of God, praise be to Him, and peace and blessings upon His Messenger:

The Editorial Board of Al-Mudawwana Journal is honored to present to its distinguished readership—professors, students, and researchers—the second issue of Volume Twelve. This issue is remarkable in both scope and form, as it comprises thirty-six scholarly articles, all published in English.

This strategic choice reflects our aspiration to broaden the journal's visibility and enhance its international standing. Given that English accounts for more than ninety percent of academic research disseminated online, and in view of the intense technological competition among global information hubs, it has become imperative for us to adapt to this transformation. Such adaptation, however, does not imply any alteration of content, deviation from our editorial principles, or departure from the vision we established in October 2014. Rather, it represents our commitment to keeping pace with global developments by issuing a special edition entirely in English.

Although unified by language, the articles are diverse in subject matter. They encompass modern critical studies, literary research, linguistic scholarship and language pedagogy, as well as contemporary philosophical inquiries. The issue also features contributions in media and communication studies, history, social sciences, educational psychology, and other disciplines that intersect with language and literature.

This orientation was necessary for the reasons outlined above. The diversity of topics and openness to interdisciplinary perspectives directly contribute to expanding readership and widening the journal's reach. Through this, we endeavor to

elevate the journal to higher academic rankings, consistently striving to provide distinguished service that meets the expectations of our readers worldwide.

Finally, we wish all our readers an enjoyable and intellectually rewarding experience. We extend our sincere gratitude to the reviewers and referees, whose efforts were indispensable to the publication of this issue. Special thanks are also due to the editorial team, particularly our esteemed colleague Fatima Zahra Boucherit, who meticulously prepared and formatted the issue in its customary presentation.

Peace and blessings to all.

**Editor-in-Chief – Prof. Saeed Toumi**

## الافتتاحية:

بسم الله والحمد لله والصلوة والسلام على رسول الله: يسعدنا نحن طافم تحرير مجلة المدونة أن تزف لقرائها الأوفىء أستاذة وطلبة وباحثين العدد الثاني من المجلد الثاني عشر، والذي كان استثنائيا في محتواه شكلا حيث حوى ستة وثلاثين مقالا كلها باللغة الإنجليزية. فمن أحل مرئية أوسع للمجلة رغبة في عالميتها ولسيطرة اللغة الإنجليزية على أكثر من تسعين بالمائة من البحوث الأكاديمية على شبكة الأنترنيت، وحتى تكون بحوث المجلة ميسرة في جميع قارات العالم في ظل التنافس التكنولوجي الشرس بين أقطاب المعلوماتية في العالم، كان لزاما علينا أن نواكب هذا التحول طبعا دون تغيير في المحتوى أو حياد أو تجاوز لخط المجلة الذي رسمناه ذات يوم من أكتوبر ألفين وأربعة عشر. قلت كان لزاما علينا مواكبة هذا التحول بإصدار عدد خالص باللغة الإنجليزية، مقالات وحدتها اللغة ولكن فرقها المضامين، حيث طرق بعضها الدراسات النقدية الحديثة، وبعضها الدراسات الأدبية، وبعضها عرج على جهود علماء الدراسات اللسانية وتعليمية اللغات، وكذا الدراسات الفلسفية المعاصرة، دون أن ننسى الحقول المعرفية الأخرى كعلوم الإعلام والاتصال والتاريخ والعلوم الاجتماعية وعلم النفس التربوي وغيرها من العلوم الأخرى التي تتلاقح مع علوم اللغة والأدب.

ولعل هذا التوجه كان ضروريا للأسباب التي ذكرنا آنفا، فتعدد المضامين والمحاتويات والانفتاح على العلوم الأخرى سبب مباشر لتنوع المقرؤية واتساع رقتها، والتي نسعى من خلالها بترقية المجلة إلى تصنيف أعلى دائما في إطار خدمة راقية ترور قراء المجلة من باحثين ومن مختلف بقاع العالم.

أخيرا نتمنى قراءة ممتعة مفيدة للجميع، كما لا يفوتنا في هذا المقام أن نتقدم بالشكر الجليل لجميع المراجعين والمحكمين الذين لولاهم لما صدر هذا العدد، والشكر موصول لطاقم التحرير وعلى رأسهم الأخت الفاضلة فاطمة الزهراء بوشريط التي صفت العدد وأعدته في خلته المعتادة. والسلام للجميع.

رئيس التحرير- أ.د/ سعيد تومي

*The Semiotics of Titles and the Aesthetics of Narration in  
the Novel Destinies for Rabai al-Madhoun*

سيمائية العنونة وجماليات السرد في رواية مصائر

لربعي المدهون

Nour el houda Hallab\*

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**Abstract:**

This research paper explores the aesthetics of narration and the semiotics of the title Destinies: Concerto, the Holocaust, and the Nakba by Jordanian novelist Rabai al-Madhoun. In this novel, al-Madhoun presents his vision and interpretation of the Palestinian experience, tracing its history from the occupation of Palestine to the Oslo negotiations and beyond. Classified as Nakba literature, the novel stands as an exceptional narrative case within contemporary Arabic fiction, drawing heavily from Palestinian history. Our analysis reveals that al-Madhoun, despite the relative modernity of his literary career, has established a distinguished creative presence through his masterful use of narrative techniques. Moreover, he intertwines political, historical, and cultural elements to present his perspective on reality and deliver multiple messages to the Palestinian reader.

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**Keywords:** narrative aesthetics; Vision of reality; Contemporary Arabic novel; Semiotics of the title.

**ملخص:**

تسعى هذه الورقة البحثية إلى الكشف عن جماليات السرد وسيمائية العنوان في رواية مصائر: كونشرتو، الملوκوست والنكبة، للروائي الأردني رعي المدهون، والتي وضـعـ فيها رؤيته وقراءاته للمشهد الفلسطيني منذ وطأة اليهود المحتلين أرض فلسطين إلى غـاـيةـ مفاوضات أوسلو وما بـعـدـهاـ، والتي تصنـفـ ضمنـ أدـبـ النـكـبةـ، كماـ أـنـماـ تـشـكـلـ حـالـةـ سـرـديـةـ استـشـائـيـةـ فيـ الروـاـيـةـ العـرـبـيـةـ المـعاـصـرـةـ لأنـهاـ تـغـرـفـ منـ تـارـيـخـ فـلـسـطـيـنـ. توـصلـنـاـ إـلـىـ أنـ المـدـهـونـ تـمـكـنـ بـرـوـايـتـهـ مـصـائـرـ منـ تـسـجـيلـ حـضـورـ إـبـدـاعـيـ مـتـمـيـزـ بـتـوـظـيفـ جـمـالـيـاتـ السـرـدـ علىـ الرـغـمـ منـ حـدـائـةـ تـجـريـتـهـ وـذـلـكـ عـلـىـ مـسـتـوـيـاتـ عـدـةـ، كـمـ سـعـيـ إـلـىـ تـقـدـيمـ رـؤـيـتـهـ لـلـوـاقـعـ وـتـمـرـيـرـ رـسـائـلـ مـتـعـدـدـةـ لـلـمـتـلـقـيـ الـفـلـسـطـيـنـيـ، لـذـاـ نـرـىـ التـمـاجـ بـيـنـ الـمـعـلـومـاتـ السـيـاسـيـةـ وـالـتـارـيـخـيـةـ وـالـقـلـافـيـةـ.

**كلمات مفتاحية:** جماليات السرد؛ رؤية الواقع؛ الرواية العربية المعاصرة؛ سيميائية العنوان.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Arabic novel has undergone several stages of evolution since its emergence more than a century ago in Egypt, pioneered by Muhammad Hussein Haikal (1888–1956). Critics widely agree that his work marked the first Arabic novel to meet modern artistic standards, establishing a foundational moment for this literary form, which was unfamiliar to Arab audiences whose artistic sensibilities had long been shaped by poetry.

Tracing the development of the Arabic novel, we can identify three key phases: the foundational stage, the authentication stage, and the experimental stage. The foundational stage saw the novel's introduction as a new literary genre, while the authentication stage was characterized by efforts from Arab critics and novelists to establish its legitimacy and demonstrate its capacity to encapsulate the struggles and aspirations of the Arab individual. More recently, we have witnessed profound transformations in both form and content, marking the experimental stage, where novelists push boundaries and redefine the possibilities of Arabic fiction.

Arab novelists have embraced experimentation as a means of engaging with modern phenomena that reflect the complexities of Arab social, political, and cultural realities. Like many contemporary Arabic novels, *Destinies: Concerto of the Holocaust and the Nakba* embodies this experimental spirit, utilizing innovative techniques to challenge the authority of the traditional novelistic model. Through an open-ended narrative structure that embraces multiplicity and divergence, the novel asserts its commitment to creative renewal and literary evolution.

Published in Beirut in 2015, *Destinies* garnered significant attention when it won the International Prize for Arabic Fiction (the Arabic Booker Prize) just a year after its release. However, the novel also sparked intense literary and political debate, as some critics viewed it as a form of normalization with the Israeli occupation, further complicated by the fact that its author, Rabai al-Madhoun, is an expatriate Arab journalist based in London. Notably, the novel appears to be influenced by media discourse, employing a direct and documentary-driven style that at times

resembles journalistic investigation rather than literary fiction. While traditional narratives construct imaginary worlds parallel to reality, Destinies blurs these boundaries, blending reportage with storytelling in a way that challenges conventional expectations of the novelistic form.

The novel explores the struggles of a Palestinian family living in exile, longing to return to their homeland. Through this portrayal, the author delves into the collective Palestinian memory, narrating their life chronologically, as the duality of migration and return remains an ever-present concern in the Palestinian consciousness.

In his novel, the writer employs historical narration and documentary storytelling, crafting a realistic narrative filled with well-documented events. The storyline spans from the 1948 Nakba and the 1967 setback to the normalization process with Israel, culminating in the Oslo Accords and their aftermath. This work aligns with Nakba literature, as it confronts the painful Palestinian reality shaped by oppression, where creativity and resistance emerge as defining elements of the Palestinian novel.

Al-Madhoun integrates an extensive collection of historical, political, and social information, incorporating multiple languages alongside classical Arabic, including Palestinian dialect, Hebrew, English, French, and Russian. He departs from fictional imagination, crafting his novel under the influence of media narratives, emphasizing that storytelling is an expansive act that merges literary and non-literary discourses (Yaktin, 1991, p. 46).<sup>7</sup> He also takes a bold approach in his novelistic project, weaving together the narratives of both Palestinian and Israeli characters—figures who exist in a space

between reality and fiction. These characters embody the concerns of the Palestinian cause, express aspirations for peace, seek reconciliation, and advocate for coexistence.

### **1- Semiotics of the Title:**

For a long time, both Arab and Western scholars have overlooked the significance of the title, dismissing it as a mere linguistic label with little analytical value. Consequently, they bypassed it in favor of engaging directly with the main text, much like they did with other textual thresholds.

Ali Jaafar Al-Alaq challenges this marginalization, asserting: "The title that precedes the text and marks its trajectory is not merely a name that identifies a literary work, establishes its identity, or attributes it to a specific author. It has evolved into something far more profound. Its relationship with the text has grown increasingly intricate—it serves as an entryway to the architecture of the text, offering a luminous yet enigmatic glimpse into its labyrinthine passages. After enduring long periods of neglect, the title has begun to reclaim its power, emerging from the obscurity that once concealed its significance and confined it to oblivion. Only recently has the function of the title received the critical attention it deserves (Al-Alaq, 1997, p. 100.101).

Amid this overwhelming ambition and intense desire for renewal, the title has reclaimed its rightful status, no longer serving as an auxiliary element but rather earning its place both creatively and methodologically in modern literary studies. It has become a focal point of interest for numerous scholars in the West, as it represents a parallel structure to the text, functioning

as an interpretive key and a textual threshold. In the words of Gérard Genette, the title is an essential component that cannot be overlooked or dismissed.

The title has transformed into a signifier that directly references and interacts with its text and not just a mere peripheral text reigning over its main body. It has become an integral link within the strategic construction of the literary work. Critic Hamid Lahmadani argues that the titles of contemporary novels actively engage in experimentation to achieve modernity and universality. At the same time, they seek to establish a dialogue with literary heritage—reconnecting with tradition while infusing it with new concepts and contemporary visions. This comes after a period of rupture in the Arab novel, during which writers, in their openness to Western literature, sought to adopt, imitate, and adapt modern narrative forms and techniques, often borrowing and reshaping them within an Arab literary framework (Hamdaoui, 2006). What is noticeable about the modernist title is that it combines experimentation with Western novel techniques and the authenticity of the Arab novel by benefiting from heritage and drawing inspiration from its forms in opposition, dialogue, and attachment.

The reader must actively engage with the text, employing interpretative tools to decipher its layers and access its hidden dimensions. This applies not to straightforward or superficial titles, but to those rich in meaning—titles that intertwine deeply with the essence of the texts from which they emerge. Semiotics stands at the forefront of analytical approaches suited to such creative works, as it embraces critical study and recognizes the title as a micro-structure inherently connected to its overarching

macro-structure.

In both poetry and prose, Arabic titles have undergone significant transformations in the modern era, evolving alongside their texts. For centuries, they remained bound by the constraints of rhymed language and classical Arabic conventions. However, with the rise of modernity and the independence of most Arab nations, writers and poets began crafting unprecedented, innovative titles. This shift reflected their embrace of experimentation—a creative gamble that led them to draw inspiration from diverse sources, including literary heritage, lived reality, and nature. In these titles, simple words intersect with profound meaning, producing a sense of poetic ambiguity—one of the defining artistic values of contemporary literature.

Gérard Genette, a leading critic of the French structuralist school specializing in poetics, devoted significant attention to the title as a parallel text—one that exists within the framework of both the surrounding and accompanying text. Meanwhile, Jacques Derrida viewed the title as a means of restoring significance to the margin, often at the expense of the main text—an idea aligned with postmodernist thought.

The title functions as the signifier, while the text serves as the signified. It acts as a visible indicator that hints at the concealed or as the subject, with the text as its predicate. Understanding the title is inseparable from understanding the text itself, as the two share a relationship akin to that of a precursor and its continuation. As the first threshold a reader encounters, the title demands interpretation, as it represents the external structure that reflects the deeper internal composition of the text.

A title is a communicative sign with a semiotic dimension, requiring deconstruction to reveal its underlying meanings. The title in question consists of four lexical components—two Arabic and two foreign—which symbolically affirm that Palestine, in essence, identity, and belonging, remains Arabic from beginning to end. The number four mirrors the four movements of the novel, each seemingly independent in its narrative yet ultimately converging to form a unified whole, much like the orchestration of a concerto.

To fully grasp the title's significance, it is essential to analyze each of its components individually:

**Destinies:** Followed by a colon (:)—a punctuation mark that signals elaboration—this word is explained by the three subsequent terms: Concerto, Holocaust, and Nakba. As an indefinite singular noun implying multiplicity, "Destinies" conveys the idea of various intertwined fates, particularly the uncertain and tragic future of the Palestinian people under Zionist occupation. It highlights both the individual and collective suffering of Palestinians, emphasizing their isolation in facing their hardships.

**Concerto:** A non-Arabic word of Italian origin, concerto refers to a harmonious musical composition, typically performed by an ensemble. Rooted in the Latin *concertare*—meaning struggle or contest—the term carries dual connotations: artistic harmony and a struggle requiring effort. According to Rabai al-Madhoun, this choice reflects the novel's structural form, which unfolds in four movements, mirroring the structure of a classical concerto.

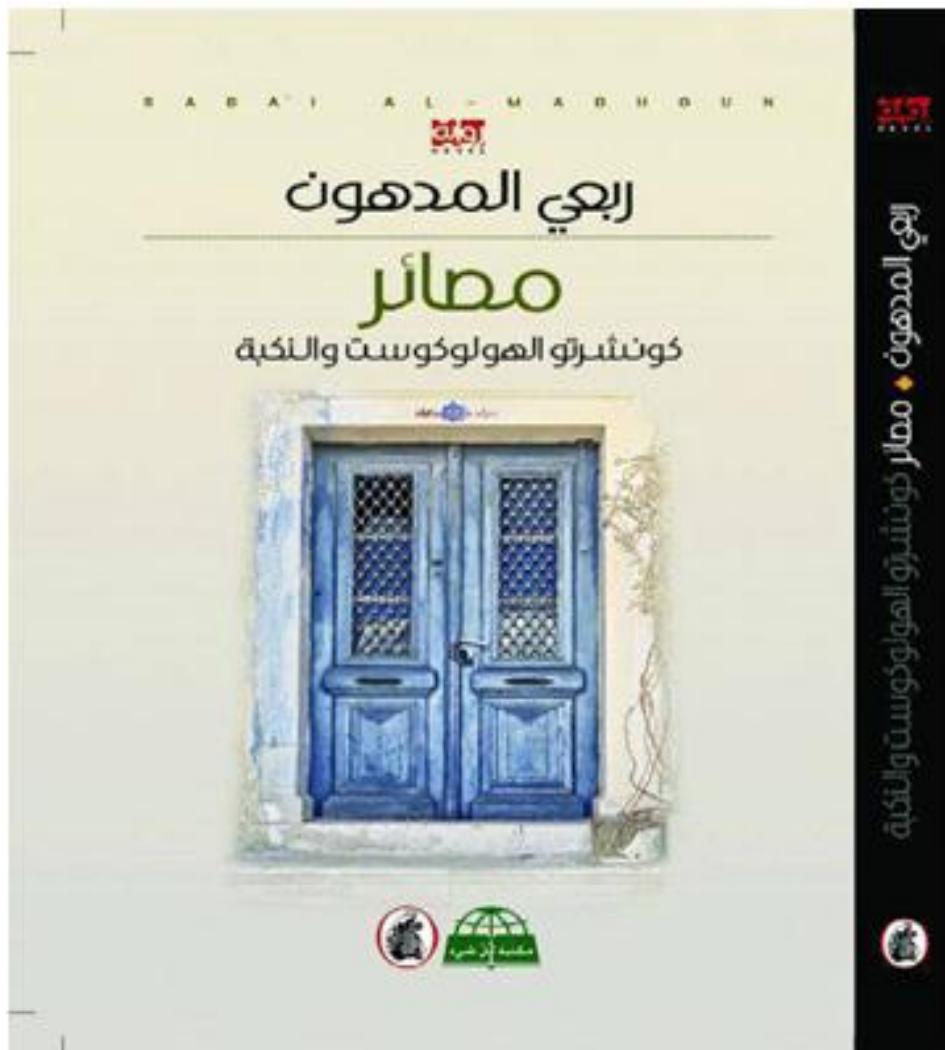
**Holocaust:** Originally referring to a sacrificial offering consumed by fire in Jewish mythology, the term later became synonymous

with the genocide of millions of Jews during World War II by the Nazi regime. The Zionist narrative of the Holocaust has played a crucial role in shaping global perceptions and justifications for the establishment of Israel.

**Nakba:** The Arabic term for "catastrophe," Nakba marks the 1948 mass displacement of Palestinians from their homeland following the creation of the State of Israel. It encompasses expulsion, dispossession, occupation, violence, historical revisionism, and the erasure of Palestinian identity—making it a pivotal concept in Palestinian memory and resistance.

The recurrence of the number four—reflected in the four-word title and the novel's structure—further reinforces the novel's thematic composition. As the author explains in the introduction, the narrative unfolds in four distinct movements, each centered on two main protagonists who later become secondary figures as new characters take their place. This dynamic rotation continues until the final movement, echoing the fluid and interconnected nature of destinies in Palestinian history. The novel took four years to complete, as the author himself stated, during which he visited Palestine four times. The recurring presence of the number four throughout the novel may symbolize the writer's deep-seated longing as a Palestinian dreaming of returning to his homeland. In many ways, the number four holds profound significance—it represents the four walls of a home, evoking a sense of stability, warmth, and security. Geographically, it encompasses the four cardinal directions (north, south, east, and west), while in nature, it reflects the four seasons (winter, spring, summer, and autumn). This symbolic symmetry conveys a sense of continuity,

movement, and life itself.



## 2-Semiotics of the Cover :

The book cover is no longer merely a protective layer or a simple carrier of the novel's text; it has become its visual and symbolic identity—its first impression to the reader. As a result,

it holds significant weight in literary reception, drawing careful attention from both writers and publishers. The design and composition of the cover are meticulously crafted to align with the writer's artistic vision, serving as an extension of the novel's thematic and aesthetic essence.

A careful examination of the novel's cover reveals several symbolic elements, the most striking of which is the dominant light brown hue. This color, which envelops the front cover, carries strong connotations of land and homeland. However, its faded and muted tone suggests the changes and hardships inflicted upon it—an allusion to the impact of Zionist occupation on beloved Palestine.

At the center of this faded brown space stands an old, closed door, its blue paint worn and eroded by time and external influences. The door appears to have remained shut for years, exuding an aura of solitude and longing, as if waiting for its rightful owner to return and open it at any moment. This door may symbolically represent Palestine itself, while its faded blue color conveys the enduring hope that never abandons the Palestinian people—the hope of return, of freedom, of reclaiming their land, and of resisting occupation despite the immense political and social struggles they face.

At the top of the cover, the author's name appears in English in a small font, perhaps as a gesture of appreciation for the language that has become part of his reality. Below it, his name is prominently displayed in a larger, bold font, reinforcing his identity and deep-rooted sense of belonging. The base of the cover carries a dark theme, reminiscent of Palestine as a wounded yet unforgettable homeland. Beyond the interplay of

colors and the closed door, an ornamental shrub clings to the wall, its leaves yellowed and weakened by neglect. Yet, despite its frailty, it resists death, embodying the Palestinian spirit—persistent, unyielding, and determined to survive against all odds.

Above the door, an indistinct Star of David is faintly visible, symbolizing the Israeli occupation. Its presence appears intrusive, an imposed mark disrupting the door's natural state—an apt reflection of the occupation's false and unjust narrative.

### 3. The Significance of Dedication in the Novel:

Dedication has become an established literary and methodological tradition in creative works, reflecting a writer's moral appreciation and loyalty to those who have supported them, whether materially or emotionally. Recognizing its significance, the author titled this section "Before Reading", using it as an opportunity to express gratitude with a symbolic bouquet of thanks. He dedicates this gesture to his loyal publishers—Maher Kayali, Director of the Arab Institute for Studies and Publishing in Beirut and Amman, and Saleh Abbasi, General Manager of the Kul Shi Library in Haifa. He also extends his appreciation to his colleagues in London, his wife and lifelong companion Sanaa, and all those who assisted him during his visits to Palestine.

By framing his novel as an act of loyalty, love, and gratitude, the writer pays tribute to everyone who contributed to the completion of this work, whether by sharing information or personal stories. In doing so, he may also be engaging in novelistic experimentation—challenging conventional literary norms and surprising the reader by selecting a diverse group of

colleagues and their spouses from different countries as recipients of his dedication.

This experimental approach adds an aesthetic dimension to the "Before Reading" section, elevating it beyond a simple expression of thanks. It breaks from the traditional dedication format by providing insights into the circumstances surrounding the novel's creation, offering the reader a glimpse into its background before delving into the narrative itself.

Furthermore, the writer employs narrative language as a flexible tool, skillfully weaving historical and political realities into the novel. His use of Palestinian colloquial expressions and locally specific vocabulary resonates with contemporary Palestinian readers—particularly those in the diaspora who, unable to experience their homeland firsthand, must rely on language, storytelling, and literary imagination to connect with their roots.

#### 4. Aesthetics of narration in the novel:

The novel unfolds through four alternating movements, each seamlessly leading into the next. At first glance, the four-part structure devised by Al-Madhoun may appear distinct in its narrative paths, but ultimately, these movements converge, harmonize, and interweave into a cohesive whole. This structural innovation creates a layered narrative complexity, shaping the novel's spatial identity in a way that goes beyond mere settings or backdrops for events.

In Al-Madhoun's approach, space is not merely a physical location where events unfold, nor just a poetic focal point—it becomes an intrinsic part of the novel's aesthetic and compositional essence. Space operates as both form and

meaning, memory and identity, raising deeper existential and cultural questions. It is intricately tied to our psychological, cognitive, and ideological fabric, reflecting the Palestinian experience not just in geographical terms, but as a profound symbol of history, displacement, and belonging (Nadjm, 2000, p. 12).

➤ The First Movement:

This movement unfolded during the British Mandate in Palestine, centering on the story of Walid Dahman's family, an old Palestinian family whose members were scattered across the world due to displacement. Some emigrated and lost all ties to their homeland, while others attempted to return and settle but found themselves grappling with an overwhelming sense of alienation, eventually choosing to leave again. Some, however, reluctantly accepted the status of temporary Israelis—solely as a means to remain in Palestine, to live within its embrace, and to stay connected to its people. This reflects the persistent duality of homeland and exile, a haunting reality for every Palestinian wherever they go.

At the heart of this movement is a love story between Ivana Ardakian, a Palestinian girl from Acre of Armenian origins, and a British doctor. Their relationship led to the birth of a daughter, Julie. In 1948—the year of the Nakba—the couple fled to London, where they built a new life. However, as time passed and Julie grew stronger, Ivana's longing for her homeland intensified. Nearing the end of her life, she made a final request: for her remains to be divided between her two homes. She instructed her daughter to cremate her body, scattering part of her ashes in the River Thames in London and burying the other

part in her birthplace, Old Acre, or in Jerusalem. In the novel, Ivana's poignant words encapsulate her profound longing:

"Take part of me and all my soul to Acre, to apologize to it, neighborhood by neighborhood... Take what is left of me and bury me where I was born, just as London will bury me where I die... My friends and loved ones, one day, I don't think it is far away... I will die... I want to be buried here and buried there (Al-Madhoun, 2015, p. 70)

➤ The Second Movement:

Jenin Dahman embarks on writing her novel, Palestinian Goat, which narrates the story of Mahmoud Dahman, a man forced to flee his hometown of Majdal in Ashkelon to Gaza during the Nakba of 1948. After arriving in Gaza, he finds himself under the scrutiny of Egyptian intelligence but manages to escape, secretly returning to Majdal—leaving his family behind. However, the situation takes a devastating turn when the occupation authorities establish firm borders between Majdal and Gaza, making it impossible for Mahmoud's family to reunite with him. While his loved ones remain in Gaza, he settles in Majdal, remarries, and begins a life he never truly desired—a life dictated by the harsh realities of the occupation. Trapped under the weight of the policy of *fait accompli*, he becomes a Palestinian with Israeli document, navigating an existence between two identities: a Palestinian in a state that calls itself Israel.

Through her novel, Jenin channels the struggles of her people, using the narrator as a vessel to voice the words she longs to express. At one moment, she is at home, immersed in

revising Palestinian Goat, when the narrative shifts to her own story. As a Palestinian carrying Israeli documents, she had traveled to America to continue her studies, where she met Bassem, a young Palestinian from the West Bank. They later moved to Jaffa, got married, and chose to settle in the Old City.

However, just as they found stability and peace, an unforeseen challenge emerged—one imposed upon them by the occupation's legal system, threatening the very foundation of their marriage. With their future hanging in the balance, the couple embarks on a relentless struggle, fighting to preserve their union in the face of unjust laws designed to fragment Palestinian lives (Al-Madhoun, 2015, p. 138)

➤ The Third Movement:

Julie, the daughter of Ivana Ardakian and Walid Dahman, embarks on a journey to Palestine, the beloved occupied land, to fulfill her late mother's final wish. Alongside her husband, she travels through several Palestinian cities—Haifa, Acre, Jaffa, Jerusalem, Majdal, and Ashkelon—each stop deepening their fascination with the country's beauty. As they wander through these historic places, they become enamored with the land, its spirit, and its people. What begins as a pilgrimage to honor a mother's will soon transforms into a revelation—the stirring of a desire to return, settle, and belong.

However, the harsh reality of exile casts a long shadow over their dreams. Ivana's will takes on profound meaning, extending beyond a simple act of scattering ashes. It becomes a symbolic gesture, mirroring the resilience of Palestinians who have chosen to remain in their homeland despite daily suffering. It speaks to the universal longing for return and survival, for life and

continuity, even if the return is only in the form of ashes—sealed inside a porcelain statue, embodying the grandmother's strength and unwavering pride.

In just ten days, Al-Madhoun reconstructs an entire history—the Palestinian tragedy of exile and endurance. Through his narrative, he revives place and time, dream and reality, past and present. He gathers the voices of different generations: those who lived through the Nakba, the Naksa, the Intifada, and those who came after. He also juxtaposes these with the Jewish Holocaust, using it as a lens for a deeper, more human understanding of the Palestinian Nakba.

➤ The Fourth Movement:

In a masterful stroke, the writer intertwines historical and political discourse, confronting the reader with an unsettling comparison between victim and executioner: Nazis versus Jews, Israel versus Palestine. This contrast emerges as Walid Dahman visits the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum in occupied Jerusalem, which commemorates the atrocities committed against the Jews during World War II.

As he walks through the exhibits, Walid cannot help but draw a parallel to the Deir Yassin massacre, where Zionist militias brutally slaughtered innocent, defenseless Palestinians in 1948. The unsettling irony grips him—the Jewish survivor of yesterday's Holocaust has become today's oppressor of the Palestinian people. The victim has turned into the executioner. This haunting thought lingers, connecting the tragedies of yesterday and today.

The movement culminates in Walid and Julie's meeting with the writer, Jenin, in Jaffa. They question her about the fictional foundations of her novel, the fates of its characters, and the trajectory of her own life—including the challenges she and her husband Bassem have faced. Their conversation blurs the lines between reality and fiction, underscoring the inescapable interplay between personal stories and collective history (Al-Madhoun, 2015, p. 175)

Experimentation in Al-Madhoun's novel is evident through his masterful use of multiple narrative techniques, executed with intelligence and precision. He initially leads us to believe that we are simply following a ten-day tour through several Palestinian cities, yet beneath this surface journey lies a profound exploration of time, place, and identity. At first glance, the novel appears to center on Palestinians in the diaspora after the establishment of Israel, showcasing characters exiled or estranged from their homeland. However, it soon becomes clear that it is equally about those who remained, those who endured, and the persistent dream of return.

Al-Madhoun also constructs his narrative around the harsh realities of life under Israeli occupation, depicting soldiers, weapons, bureaucratic restrictions, and oppression at every turn. Yet, amid this suffocating presence, he simultaneously conveys a powerful Palestinian essence—not only through his characters and their struggles but also through the dialect, songs, cuisine, and even the homes that, if they could speak, would echo the returnees' longing for the land.

His novel brims with rich material, dynamic and lifelike characters, and an abundance of compelling details. As a skilled

storyteller, Al-Madhoun ensures that no subplot is left incomplete. However, while he draws inspiration from the structured form of a concerto—manipulating time across different temporal layers (the distant past, recent past, and the ten-day present)—this complexity sometimes challenges the coherence of the novel's structure. Perhaps a more fluid and organic form, akin to a Palestinian mawwal (a traditional folk song), would have better suited the narrative's emotional depth and the storyteller's voice. Yet, despite this structural intricacy, the novel captivates the reader, driven by its powerful moments, well-drawn characters, and unwavering focus on its central theme.

The novel also broadens the horizon of historical reflection, drawing a connection between the Jewish Holocaust and the Palestinian Nakba. However, as the title suggests, these two historical tragedies do not run parallel. The Holocaust surfaces in the novel through the character Aviva, Jenin's neighbor, a woman haunted by memories of the Babi Yar massacre in Kiev, Ukraine, in 1941. Tormented by the past, she screams at night, isolates herself, and ultimately drives her children away, while the Palestinian characters around her, despite their suffering, sympathize with her pain.

The Holocaust resurfaces again when Walid visits Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem. Standing before its exhibits, he sees in the faces of Jewish victims a mirror image of Palestinian suffering. He reflects that "the dead are equal only when the living are granted equal rights." In one of the most striking and intelligent moments of the novel, Walid imagines a future where another museum—dedicated to Palestinian

memory—stands opposite Yad Vashem, emerging from a long-awaited historical reconciliation that brings an end to the conflict.

The horrifying details of the Deir Yassin massacre are an integral part of the novel's narrative, resurfacing after years of attempted erasure and concealment. Today, Deir Yassin exists only as silent ruins, remnants of a history that some have sought to forget. However, the novel's imaginary museum resurrects its memory, ensuring that the massacre—which shaped the tragic contours of the 1948 Nakba—is never lost to time.

In a powerful scene, Walid confronts an Israeli guide at the imaginary museum, telling her that if she fails to grasp the full weight of Deir Yassin's history, then neither can others fully comprehend the suffering endured by victims elsewhere. "Museum for the museum," he declares, emphasizing that human suffering cannot be selectively acknowledged.

The novel also touches on historical milestones in Arab-Israeli relations, including Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's visit to Israel in the 1970s, a moment that signaled the beginning of normalization efforts between the two nations.

## **CONCLUSION:**

With *Fate*, Al-Madhoun cements his place as a distinguished and innovative storyteller, skillfully weaving the aesthetics of narration into his work despite the relative novelty of his experience. From the textual thresholds to the richly layered prose, the novel overflows with poetic passages, folk wisdom, and a deeply personal vision of reality.

Through his bold experimental approach, Al-Madhoun

embarks on a literary adventure, exploring new perspectives and creative techniques that reflect his drive for renewal and reinvention. His novel serves as a multi-layered message to Palestinian readers, intertwining political, historical, and cultural narratives to illuminate their collective experience.

Moreover, Fate stands out as a text that thrives on intertextuality, drawing from a vast array of sources across various fields of knowledge to create an interactive and multidimensional narrative. The novel's historical depth is immense, as Al-Madhoun meticulously ensures that no significant event or political moment tied to Palestine is left unmentioned.

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